

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Outdoor Groups in Salt Lake City, Utah

July 18, 1992

The President. Well, I came prepared with a few cheaters because on this beautiful day it is most fitting and appropriate that we talk about the environment, with the emphasis on those that like the outdoors and believe in multiple use and believe in fishing and believe in hunting and believe in camping. And I do, and my family does. I did want to try this morning, though, to put in perspective before taking questions what I think is a pretty good environmental record.

I don't pretend to be able to keep every organization happy. I can't do that because I also have a certain—not only do I feel a sense of obligation to stewardship of the parks and of the wilderness and of the great outdoors, but I also feel a sense of stewardship towards American families that are trying to work for a living. To achieve a balance between growth and the environment is something that I think every President ought to feel an obligation to achieve. And I've tried to do exactly that.

But before getting to the questions, and I hope it's not too self-serving, I thought I'd just click off some accomplishments that I think should make a difference to those who share my love of the outdoors.

We signed, I guess, the most forward-looking environmental legislation in modern times in a revival and renewal of the Clean Air Act, improvement of the Clean Air Act. I believe that it's going to have a major effect not just on the great outdoors as we all love it but on the cities and everything else.

We've assessed more fines for violations of environmental policy, environmental law, than any previous administration. And indeed, more people are incarcerated for actually violating the environmental laws of this country.

We've doubled the funding, doubled the funding for national parks, wildlife, and outdoor recreation, and tripled the funds, tripled the funds for States for parks and open space. I think that's a good record. We've

proposed or added 20 new national parks, proposed or added 57 new wildlife refuges, added 1.5 million new acres to the national parks, and added 6.4 million acres to the vast Wilderness System. Twenty-seven hundred miles of rivers to Wild and Scenic Rivers System have been added.

We've increased wetlands protection from 295 million to 812 million since I've been President. And I'd like to hear from some and maybe answer some questions on the controversy that surrounds the wetlands policy. But I believe our policy of no net loss is good. We've added to the wetlands to compensate for those areas where there has been loss.

We've closed off the oil development in certain environmentally sensitive areas of the California coast, the Florida coast, and in New England, isolating them until the year 2000 when we can look at technology and look at the environment. We've established three new national marine sanctuaries, including the most recent one in Monterey Bay, which is, I guess, the largest one ever; increased funding, and this comes as great interest to some here, for fishing, fisheries management, and \$80 million added to that and requested full funding for Wallop-Breaux.

Let me just say here that when you get in Washington you might have some earmarked funds, but the propensity in the way it works with the Congress is they want to take those earmarked funds and use them for other purposes. I stood up against that because I believe in Wallop-Breaux; I believe that the money ought to be used for what we said it would be used for. And I'm going to keep on fighting for that principle. And we fought for a lot of projects, Superfund and all, where we've not gotten the funding we requested. But I'm going to keep on working to try to do that.

So I cite this because as you get into a political year and you get into a subject that has this many variations, environmental protection, you're bound to take some heat.

But I'm very proud of the record.

The last thing I'd mention is Rio de Janeiro. I do not consider it leadership to go and fall in line with a bunch of other countries who accept standards and don't live up to them. When the United States makes a commitment, we ought to keep our word. Great countries, like great men, should keep their word. That's what a former Justice of our Supreme Court said, and that's the way I feel. So I did not go down there to try to get in line, putting standards and prohibitions on the United States that we couldn't live up to or didn't want to.

So we did do well on forestry down there. We did do well on climate control. I have insisted that we don't make more regulations unless we know where the science is on these things. It's very inexact at this point. And yet, underlying it all was my commitment and our administration's commitment to a sound environment.

So that's where we stand. I don't know how this is all set up, Val, but I'll be glad to go for questions. Here's one right here.

Q. Our school last year built over 300 trees and—

The President. This one's not working. You come over here.

Q. Last year and every year our school built over 300 trees. And we did it in City Butte Canyon. Are they doing that all over the United States and the world?

The President. I think so. And every little bit helps. Every tree planted is part of a reforestation initiative that is sound. We have a program to plant a billion trees a year, tiny little things, but Government can't do this. Schools, families, whoever have to get this job done. The United States is the leader in forestry. We are the leaders in trying to preserve the great rain forests. We've got a good record ourselves on it.

So what you say your school is doing, if everybody around the country at his or her school does the same thing, then we can achieve our goal. And it's very, very important. It's important to clean air. It's important to everything, including the sporting quality of the whole United States environment.

Q. President Bush, there is an abundant amount of wildlife in the United States today, and it's principally because hunters

and fishermen have spent a lot of money, time, and resources to secure their habitat, to provide for their game management. There's a great deal of attack on this traditional wildlife management tool. Specifically, proposition 200 in Arizona is worded where they could ban hunting on public lands. What is your position on that issue?

The President. You know, I'm a hunter. I happen to be a quail hunter of only fair proportions, I might add. [Laughter] But when I go to hunt every year, and I try to do it, and I go down there, and I see these people standing out that oppose all hunting. They are inconsiderate of sound game management. They're inconsiderate of people who like to hunt and who recognize not only the fun of the sport but also the sound environmental practice of thinning out herds, for example, when it comes to deer or whatever else it is.

So I oppose what I consider extremists' tactics. I'd rather see sound management through sound sports practice than I would see some of these herds thinned out through famine and suffering of that kind.

So I will stand with the hunter. I don't think there's anything in sound hunting that is inconsistent with sound environmental policy. And I don't know about that proposition, but that's the way I feel.

Yes, sir.

Q. Mr. President, do we expect to see a reduction in spending abroad to fund these policies that you are proposing and trying to continue in the country now?

The President. Well, we've reduced defense spending tremendously. I mean, that's what overshadows all other spending that you might say abroad. Here's my position. We've won the cold war. What's happened, as I see these kids sitting here and I think about it, I think it's historic. They don't have little drills in their schools anymore like some of you all had about climbing under the desks for fear of nuclear warfare. The deal we hammered out with Yeltsin to eliminate these ICBM's, SS-18's, is major. It is a significant achievement for mankind, particularly for the young people in this country and elsewhere.

We still have an obligation to help people abroad. When there's famine in south

Africa, the southern part of Africa, I do think we have an obligation. I got a great lesson from the church the other day on how the mission of the church, actually in a private way, tries to help. The Government has an obligation to help.

So we're not going to be able to cut off all of our foreign aid or our defense because of the fact the world is a more calm, a more tranquil place. The spending has been reduced on defense particularly, and I think that we can probably reduce it more as we go along. But I don't think we should close our eyes to the fact that we're living in a place where you have terrorists, you have threats that crop up like the threat from the aggression of Saddam Hussein against Kuwait, where only the United States can stand and take action.

On foreign aid itself, you have to look at it, as I do, for an insurance policy, avoiding future catastrophe, and also the humanitarian side.

But to get back to your question, there will be a chance to redirect more of the funds from the security and foreign account to the domestic side. Whether it will be funneled into the environment and all I just can't say, because I think, as I've clicked off here at the beginning of this, the priorities that our administration has set—and frankly, some of them have been underfunded by the Congress. I'll continue to fight for full funding.

Q. As was alluded to earlier, wildlife populations are healthier and more numerous today than they have ever been. There are a few people who would stop hunting on our public lands, hunting and fishing on our public lands. And the wildlife has primarily benefited through funding by these wildlife organizations in property acquisition. Can you tell us what we can expect from your commitment to us as sportsmen as far as hunting and fishing on these public properties?

The President. I will resist any effort to stop hunting and fishing on these public lands. You know, I had a marvelous experience—not shared it with my friend the Lieutenant Governor, Johnny Morris, and others. But just the other day up in the Sequoia area in California, I met there with a group of kids that came from the inner

city of Los Angeles. We sat around in a little picnic area, and I started listening to these kids talk about their experience with gangs, being drummed in, beaten in, and then beaten out. If they go into the gang they have to be beaten up before they go into it; when they go out they get beaten up and then their families threatened.

Here were these kids sitting in the majesty of this sequoia grove, seeing the outdoors for the first time, understanding the joys of nature from which they've been sheltered because of their own underprivilege and because of their own backgrounds. They talked about the joy of camping out the night before and being with their—sitting around a little campfire talking to the other kids about their family problems. And that little incident brought home to me more clearly than anything I've done, except for a little bass fishing with some friends here, the need really to keep open, and still preserve, but to keep open these lands for sporting purposes, for fishing, for camping, for hunting.

So we are not going to permit in the name of environmental practice a shutting down of these areas to those who really need to experience the same joy those kids felt. I really feel strongly about it, and I pride myself on stewardship of our environmental resources, our environment. But I just don't think we can go to the extremes in the name of the environment, whether it's in this, trying to deny hunting or fishing to these areas, or whether it's to shut down businesses where families are needlessly thrown out of work.

I think of the endangered species. We're going through a very important debate and an important discussion of how do you preserve the endangered species and yet not say to a family, "Look, you all just aren't going to be able to make a living anymore." I feel as President a certain stewardship for that; I really do. We're trying to find a proper balance, and balance is a key word in all of this. But just to say you're going to preserve public lands by denying hunting and fishing, I'm strongly opposed to that.

Q. A number of groups here today are actively involved in habitat acquisition: Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk

Foundation. Will the Federal Government continue to support us in matching funds and help us develop a habitat for wildlife so we can continue to increase our herds and increase our duck populations?

The President. We should and will. And I don't know enough about the detail; Roger Porter is here and can answer the specifics. But yes, I mean, this is all of our common belief. I'm more familiar with Ducks Unlimited, but Ducks Unlimited I think offer sound environmental practice. They certainly don't oppose hunting, but they do propose and support programs for increasing the ducks and other fowl.

So I'm strongly in support of that. I'm just a little at a loss to give you any specifics in terms of numbers as to how the Federal Government might do a better job in working cooperatively here.

Q. President Bush, as past chairman of Ducks Unlimited for Utah, can you tell us a little bit how our no-net-loss program is working as far as the lands that have been taken, and what we're doing to replace those?

The President. Well, we're in a debate, and we're also in a struggle on wetlands. I think we're doing all right. We've added to the wetlands. We're continuing to purchase wetlands. I get into a fight with some—I think, some of the people on the extremes on wetland. I hear from a lot of farmers and a lot of agricultural people who have one little sump on the property for a short period of time, and then they're denied use of that land.

We had one extreme case of a downtown parking area where building couldn't take place because it was wet. So we're trying to stand against the extremes, and yet I'm trying to live up to this policy, which I believe is sound environmental practice, of no net loss of wetlands. We're trading, and we're buying. And I'm going to continue to support that concept.

I can't tell you that it's without a furor, because some of the groups are saying we're not doing enough. I think our record is pretty good in keeping the commitment I made several years ago to no net loss. But I would welcome from experts—and I'm surrounded by them here—criticism or suggestions as to what we could do to further

enhance the policy without going to the extreme.

Again, I think sometimes I get brought to my attention cases where one of our regulatory agency or another have overinterpreted the law and have kept reasonable development from taking place. So once again, I'll go back to the answer I gave over here to the question of hunting: We're trying to find a balanced policy, but the underpinning of it, in response to your question, no net loss. And that's why we're—[inaudible]—and purchasing wetlands.

Sir.

Q. Mr. President, as you probably know, the Central Utah Project is one of the most critical issues facing Utah outdoor interests. It's a project which has been repaired, in our view, through the mechanisms that have been established to meet the wildlife mitigation and environmental mitigation requirements. We understand that there is a problem with its passage now, and it's based upon, as I understand it, California Senator Seymour's efforts to get you to commit to veto the H.R. 429 omnibus water bill when it reaches your desk if it doesn't have the amendments he wants to serve the California agribusiness interests.

We're really interested, sir, in having you sign the bill when it gets to your desk, and even more, near term, we're interested, if you could, sir, in having you work with the Senate to get the Senate to assign some conferees so we can get that thing done during this Congress. Could you tell us where you are on that?

The President. Well, where we are is that I don't know what they're going to send me. And therefore, I can't commit to sign or veto until I know exactly what's in it. But in terms of the project itself, we have been and will continue to be supportive.

One of the great problems in this job—and that's why I strongly favor the line-item veto—is that you are sent under the name of, say, sound water practice or sound environmental practice a piece of legislation where then you always have to balance out does the good outweigh the bad.

But in terms of this project, we are supportive. I believe your Senators have been

working diligently for it. I hope it comes in a way that I can strongly endorse that action.

Q. Mr. President, this is indeed a great pleasure. You have been in support of the free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. Therefore, I am sure that you are not aware of a U.S. Park Service-sponsored monopoly on Lake Powell, a national recreation area in southern Utah. All commerce in a 2,000-square-mile area, including five separate marinas in two States, is controlled by one company from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The lack of competition creates high prices and minimal level of quality service. This, I feel, is repressive and is rapidly driving many boaters away, thus hurting the marine business and restricting free enterprise in the State of Utah. Will your second administration address these inequities?

The President. The answer is, your predicate was correct; I'm not familiar with the details of Lake Powell. And thus I can honestly dodge having an opinion on this particular issue. But no, I believe there should be competition in these matters, if that's what the objection is. But I really don't want to speak on a subject that I should be perhaps familiar with but I'm not. But in principle, I can't argue with what I believe your question implied was a proper conclusion. But I just don't want to comment without knowing the facts.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. I'm here representing Safari Club International. And we as hunters want to ask you as a hunter, and we as citizens: How can we deal with the people who want to deny us our second amendment rights, and how do we answer them properly and keep our amendment safe?

The President. I think a lot of it is, and this goes back to maybe a fundamental answer, but a lot is to who you elect to office. I think in the local level, in the State legislative level, Val's level, a lot of the decisions are made. A lot of them are made at the Federal level. But I think you just ought to find out and establish whatever candidate at whatever level's commitment to the environment, to hunting, to nonhunting, whatever it is. I know no other way to do it.

But the idea that we should, in the name

of the environment, knuckle under to those who really want to tie up these assets and prohibit hunting and fishing is something that I would, will, and have stood up against. But I don't know any other way to do it other than to roll up your sleeve and be sure that those topics are covered in whatever election it is, every 2-year election or every 4-year election. And that's one good thing about it, because everybody has to put into focus his or her commitment on a question of that nature.

I am not persuaded that there's a big move against the hunter and against the fisherman. There's some groups that are strong, strongly vocal. But I do not believe they represent the mainstream. And I have had a hunting and fishing license as long as I've been old enough to, and I continue to enjoy sports. I'm mainly in the fishing end of things. But for fishing and hunting, I just think you have to take it to the legislative process. I know people are turned off from politics, but that doesn't mean that you withdraw and you pull away from it. If anybody should feel like withdrawing or pulling away from something, I could make a case for the Bush family. [*Laughter*] But I'm not about to do that because I do believe in some of the stuff that I—problems I'm faced to solve. And I'm going to keep on saying what I believe.

Q. You touched a little bit earlier on the situation—kids and the joy that you saw in the kids in getting maybe their first experience with the outdoors. Could you maybe carry that a little bit further and talk about your opinion on the—I broke them both. [*Laughter*] Throw them in the lake, put a hook on them. [*Laughter*] Talk about your opinion of the correlation between improved fishing and hunting and keeping the outdoors the way that we all want it, and these kids, taking these great kids and turning them into great adults, and the family values that perhaps are created out there, your thoughts on the family values.

The President. I could wax philosophical, but they asked me a pointed and understandably pointed question 2 days ago in Wyoming. And this one was put against a political backdrop of how come I didn't stay

tuned into the convention that was going on in New York. I put it in terms of the joy that I felt fishing with my son in streams of Wyoming. He's grown; he's from Florida. But it's hard to describe unless you have done it. Ricky Clunn, that you guys know, talked about following in his underpants behind his father, fishing the streams of Oklahoma. I understand that. And I think most American family understand it. Some haven't had the opportunity to do it.

But it was very easy for me to give an honest answer that the joy of doing that with my son, albeit grown, really surpassed the politics of the moment. And I think if you feel it that strongly, you need to try to convey it to the parents and to the families that this really is a way that you can strengthen your family.

We talk about family values, and I hope not to the extreme on that. But anyone who has fished or hunted or hiked or camped with a child knows what I'm talking about. And what we have to do, I think, those of us that agree with this, is to make clear to the American people that's what we're talking about. We're not talking about something that's selfish. So when we talk about preserving the streams or the lakes for sound fishing practice, we're talking about something that has a way of strengthening families.

I know I'm not particularly articulate on this, but I really feel strongly when we talk about family that anything you do with your kids in the outdoors does nothing but strengthen the relationship between the parents and the kids at a time when—those kids that were coming out of that city in South Central, in L.A., they'd been denied that. And here, even though it wasn't with their parents, they were beginning to get that feeling of comradeship and of enjoyment and of really conversation, if you will, that strengthens, I think, the American family. So it's so hard to describe, but I feel it so strongly.

Q. Mr. President, as you travel across this beautiful Nation, a concern that we have is, I would like to know how you feel about it when there's a building that's sold to a foreign country, a public building, public lands? How do you feel, and what can we do about our lands and our buildings being

sold to the Japanese and to foreign countries? We want to own our buildings. We want to own all of our ground here. How do you feel about that?

The President. I probably differ with you on it, because I think investment by the United States abroad is a sensible thing. I think it creates a tremendous amount of jobs in America. And I think you've got to look at each—I think you have to be sure that nobody takes over the United States of America. But in terms of the percentage of investment, much more is held by Britain and Holland, for example, than the Japanese.

So I am not one who worries about people investing in the United States, particularly if it means jobs. I'll tell you an example. The BMW people are opening a plant in South Carolina. They bought some land, and they're going to create something like 4,000 to 10,000 jobs building automobiles in the United States. Now, they have to have that land if they're going to put their plant there. And I think that's good for the United States.

What I don't think is good is if it gets into the security areas where our defenses and our legitimate security needs might be pulled—

[*At this point, the microphone failed.*]

Just as I was going to make a profound statement here. [*Laughter*]

I am not an isolationist. I don't believe we should pull back. I think we have too much to offer abroad, and I don't think we have to fear from people competing in this country.

So maybe you and I differ on it, but I don't—if you were going to say do you want to sell the great wilderness area of Utah to some foreign country, no, I don't want to do that. I think we've got to be very sure that we don't aimlessly get into something like that. But in terms of investment in this country, I think that means jobs in this country. I don't think it deters from the environment or the sporting ability to have the kinds of things we're talking about here today in terms of hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation.

We probably differ, but I think I could

convince you. I don't think I have yet.

Listen, thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9 a.m. at Red Butte Gardens. In his remarks, he referred to W. Val Oveson, Lieutenant Governor of

Utah; John Morris, chairman, Bush-Quayle Outdoors Coalition; Roger Porter, Assistant to the President for Economic and Domestic Policy; and Rick Clunn, champion bass fisherman.

Remarks at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah July 18, 1992

Thank you very much. Thank you all for that warm welcome. And may I just single out your President. Mr. President—it sounds pretty good, doesn't it, for Rex—but to say to Rex Lee that I am delighted to have been introduced by him, a man who has served, first, his Government with such great distinction, integrity, and honor and now serves this wonderful university in a position of extraordinary leadership.

Allow me for a moment just to acknowledge Senator Hatch; Governor Norman Bangerter, my friend over here; Val Oveson, the Lieutenant Governor; Mayor Joseph Jenkins. And may I just suggest that it is appropriate that I pay and you all pay a special tribute to Senator Jake Garn, who's retiring this fall after years of dedicated service to Utah and to the entire Nation. And again, to President Lee and Provost Hafen and Ron Hyde and Dee Andersen, B.Y.U. Vice President, let me just say thank you for inviting me here today. More than that, I want to thank you for extending an invitation to all the Presidential candidates to come to B.Y.U. and share their views. And this is appropriate, the university not pulling back but permitting people to have a fair say in this important election year. I salute you for that.

I noticed that on your seal it says that the glory of God is intelligence. I would add that intelligence and education are absolutely necessary to fulfill your democratic obligation. So I salute you for your desire to learn more about all our candidates and where we want to lead this great Nation.

In this spirit of free speech let me register one strongly held view. I want to change things. And one thing I want to change is

the control of the House of Representatives in Washington. You talk about change, for 35 years, 36, one party has controlled that one institution, the House of Representatives. Enough of these bank scandals and post office scandals. We've got to change control, and that's why I want Richard Harrington in the United States Congress.

Let me say I agree with him on this, and with the Senators, that a strong America has led the world to change. We have not surrendered one single ounce of our sovereignty. We are the leader of the free world, undisputed, on our terms. We're the United States of America.

You know, B.Y.U. is a special place of physical beauty and spiritual strength, a place devoted to a simple creed: Enter to learn; go forth to serve. I happen to believe that there is no higher calling than serving humanity. So I say thank you for choosing B.Y.U. This home of the Cougars feels like my home. And thanks for that warm welcome.

I spent 2 days this past week far away from TV and radio, didn't listen—watch one or listen to the other—up in Wyoming, trout fishing with Secretary of State Jim Baker and our sons, Jamie and Jeb. But I'm aware that something else was going on in America this week, something real important. This is the week when all across America, crowds of panting, sweating people overran their neighborhood video stores. [Laughter] From Tallahassee to Tempe, Americans turned on their TV and decided they'd rather watch "Action Jackson" than listen to—well, never mind. Now, look, don't get the idea that this is some kind of